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HEBREW PSALMODY ¹

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Professor Kent has undertaken to provide English-reading students of the Old Testament with a complete library of hand-books for the study of the contents of that great collection of Hebrew writings, which shall be of scientific value; not necessarily presenting new and original research by the author, but representing the best results of modern scholarship. The present volume, the fifth in this series, deals with the lyric poetry of the Old Testament, including songs of lamentation, songs of love and marriage, and a variety of oracles, triumphal odes, and national songs. All of these together, however, constitute but one-fifth of the total sum of Hebrew lyric poetry here dealt with, four-fifths consisting of the Psalms. It is especially Professor Kent's treatment of that collection of hymns, constituting not merely far the greater part of Hebrew lyric poetry quantitatively but also far the greater part of it qualitatively, which I propose to discuss in this article. As Kent says in his preface, the Psalms "are the real heart of the Old Testament. In them the innermost soul of the Jewish race is laid bare." Not only this; they are "the link that binds the Old to the New Testament." They have played as large a part in Christian as in Jewish worship. They have been translated for Christian use in all kinds of forms into almost every tongue, and an enormous literature has grown up about them. From the modern standpoint, however, they "have been to a

¹ The Songs, Hymns, and Prayers of the Old Testament (The Students' Old Testament). Charles Foster Kent, Ph.D., Litt.D., Woolsey Professor of Biblical Literature in Yale University. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914. Pp. xxii, 305. \$2.75.

certain extent neglected.” Certainly there has been no approximate consensus of opinion arrived at concerning the origin of the Psalter and its various collections of Psalms, its growth, the purpose, use, date, and place of composition of its hymns collectively and individually, such as has been reached in the case of Hebrew laws and codes of law. “The present generation, however, is beginning to experience the joy of rediscovering them”; a reference to the numerous volumes on the Psalms recently published, especially in English the commentaries of Cheyne and Briggs, and this present work.

What new material have we on which to base this new study of the Psalms? Kent mentions “the recovery of the ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, and Babylonian hymns,” which “has broadened our horizon by at least two millenniums”; “the rediscovery of the genius of Hebrew rhythm,” which “has placed in the hands of the modern translator a most valuable aid in recovering the original text”; and “the discovery of Hebrew, Greek, and other texts, far older than those followed by the translators of the classic Authorized Version of the Bible,” which “has made it possible to substitute in most cases original readings for uncertain conjectures.”

This last statement is misleading, if not absolutely false. In Hebrew we still have for all practical purposes but one text, the so-called Masoretic, plus the Samaritan text for the Pentateuch. For the Greek we are a little better off, but there have been no text discoveries of serious importance even here. Numerous text emendations of Old Testament passages have been proposed, as a result, not of the discovery of new manuscripts, but of text-critical study and comparison of the Hebrew and the versions. Some of these emendations, shrewdly made, have met with general acceptance; more are still most “uncertain conjectures.” For, unfortunately, text-criticism of the Old Testament has

been, especially on the part of most "modern" scholars, largely a matter of guess-work, the reforming of the text, not on the basis of objective but of subjective evidence: as, that the critic cannot understand what is written, and therefore it is an error; or that what is written does not conform to the critic's conception of what the author should have written, and therefore must be changed. It is this sort of discovery which has given us some of the "original readings" to which Kent refers.

It should be said that this unscientific method of treatment of the text of the Old Testament is a natural reaction against the even more unscientific treatment formerly in vogue of the traditional Hebrew text as sacrosanct; and indeed we are in general in a period of reaction in Old Testament criticism. So long bound by a false tradition, the present tendency is to contradict that tradition at every point. Former opinions are discredited as such. Because formerly Hebrew writings were over-dated, so now they must all be proved late. If formerly they were accounted units, now they must be divided; if ascribed to a given author, his authorship is axiomatically denied. It is a period of unrest and upheaval, where anyone may find and found a new theory, and each newest notion is the best because the last. And all this is especially true of the criticism of the Psalms, because they have been to a certain extent neglected, Cheyne's work being the extreme representative of this method and of these ideas as applied to the Psalter.

"The rediscovery of the genius of Hebrew rhythm," to which Kent refers, goes back to Bishop Lowth's work of 1753. Since that date there have been no real discoveries, but merely the fuller application of Lowth's principles. This has been of some help in the textual criticism of the Psalter, but has been greatly overworked

by recent writers, notably Briggs in his Commentary. As Kent points out (p. 8), Hebrew poetry remained elastic and irregular both in its rhythm and its strophic structure, and those who have sought to reduce it to rule have found themselves forced by their theories "to delete many words and sentences which are clearly original and to disregard the logical connection of the thought and the literary unity of the whole." "The original text" recovered by such methods is too often a most "uncertain conjecture."

So far as textual criticism of the Psalms is concerned, Kent to the contrary, we have really made very little progress in later years. The text from which we must translate the Psalms is substantially the same today as that from which they were translated in "the classic Authorized Version of the Bible." The great improvements in our potential critical apparatus for the translation and interpretation of the Psalms are of other sorts, only one of which is mentioned by Kent—"the recovery of the ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, and Babylonian hymns." (Why not also the Indian Vedas, and the Persian Gâthas?) But having thus emphasized in his preface the importance of these hymns in Psalm-study, he makes no more actual use of them than Cheyne and Briggs had done before him. Disregarding the lesson taught by those and all other collections of ritual and liturgical hymns ancient and modern, he proceeds to treat the Psalms as occasional poems, lyrics composed for this and for that event, the same false method which gave us so many of the headings of our Psalms, and led to their ascription to David.

For an occasional poem an author must be sought, and as tradition ascribed the origin of Temple psalmody to David, so the individual Psalms came to be ascribed to him as their author. But if David wrote them, for what occasion did he write them? So the Bible story

was searched, and the effort made to attach each Psalm to some event of David's life: "when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba" (51); "when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech" (52). Today, very properly, no historical value is attached to these headings as such. Unfortunately, however, while rejecting these particular headings, commentators have made new ones of their own by pursuing precisely the same false method of attributing the individual Psalms to this or that event in the history of the Hebrews, either as contained in the Bible or as reconstructed by them, or to this or that period or individual. So Kent, following this futile method, but reacting against the old traditions and the old dates, assigns to events of the Maccabæan period about as many Psalms as were once ascribed to events in the life of David.

Professor Kemper Fullerton, of Oberlin College, pointed out some years ago, in an admirable little series of studies in the Psalter published in the *Biblical World*, the fallacy of this method of procedure, and laid down a few sane principles, of which I would cite the following:

"As a hymn book, the Psalter is a book of devotional poetry. In such poetry the religious interest is apt to dominate over the artistic interest." Accordingly the Psalter must be studied from the devotional and more specifically the liturgical standpoint.

"Like all other hymn books, it has been subjected to repeated and extensive redaction;" which he illustrates by the history of some of the most popular hymns in our modern hymn books, like "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," showing how they have been changed for denominational purposes, to fit new periods or special occasions, or to adapt the special and occasional to

general use, so that out of poems have been formed hymns; and all this in a century and a quarter of use.

“Hymns are usually more concerned with inner experiences than with outward conditions. Their allusions to contemporary history are, with rare exceptions, incidental.” To prove which he takes up and analyzes, among others, hymns of Luther, Watts, and Wesley, showing how impracticable it is in most cases to date them, either from general content or individual reference.

Although Kent suggests in his Introduction that the Psalter was intended for ritual use and is a liturgical and devotional song book, he practically ignores this in his treatment of the Psalms themselves. In commenting on the Song of Songs, he very properly disregards the older interpretations of half a century ago, which attempted to make that collection of love songs a sort of episodic drama in which is recorded the love and the virtue of a Shulamite maiden, who rejects the advances of the mighty Solomon in favor of her shepherd lover, recognizing that the references to Solomon are typical merely. The groom and the bride in love songs are the king and the queen, the poorest shepherd maiden queening it for the nonce, with her bridegroom as her mighty king. So the references which were once ascribed to Solomon in the songs of that collection are interpreted as having no reference to a special king or to any king, but as being the common use of love songs, then as now. But when he comes to deal with the forty-fifth Psalm, which is designated by its heading in the Psalter as a love song, he is obsessed with the tradition of the old method and proceeds to describe it as a “Hebrew court song,” “evidently written on the occasion of a royal marriage.” “The poem is introduced by an elaborate exordium, which is doubtless typical of Hebrew court usages.” (Why will certain

writers, when they are stating some presumption or guess of their own, always attempt to buttress it by such words as "evidently" or "doubtless," which they only use because it is not evident and because it is very much in doubt?) Then he proceeds: "The atmosphere of this Psalm is evidently that of the joyous days before the Babylonian exile." (Does he suppose that love songs are normally penitential?) And then, under the obsession alluded to, he attempts to identify it with some particular occasion. "Although this hymn may later have been sung at a royal marriage, there is little doubt that a definite theme and occasion were originally in the poet's mind." Accordingly he adopts Briggs's suggestion that the king was "Jehu the warrior, who unsheathed his sword in behalf of the true worship of Jehovah, who with his own right hand pierced the heart of his foes and by a series of bold acts established himself on the throne of northern Israel." This is precisely the principle of identification of date and author followed by the earliest commentators, whose comments, as noted above, are now discarded by all. Whatever may have been the original occasion of its composition, as it has come down to us this Psalm is a ritual love song, in which the allusions to the king are no more personal than the allusions to Solomon in the Song of Songs.

Can we date the Psalms? A method of dating pursued by commentators in general is the linguistic method. The words used in a given book or writing are tabulated and compared with the words used in other books. This is a valid method in general, but to make it really practical one must have a certain amount of securely dated material from which to start and literature sufficient to give a fairly large vocabulary. These conditions are only partly present in the Old Testament. The literature is small, and it has been so worked over in succeeding periods that it is difficult to assign fixed

dates to any large part of it. In the case of the Psalter these conditions are intensified. The vocabulary is very small and abounds in stock phrases, part of a technical ritual hymn use; and, more than any other book of the Bible, the Psalter has been written and rewritten, adapted and recast over and over again. We use today in our church services chants and hymns of very various periods, some old, some new; but all have been so rewritten, adapted, and modernized that from a mere study of their words it would be impossible to determine their original literary connection. Liturgical and devotional poetry is both the most ancient and the most modern in its form. With all the conservatism of liturgical use, we still adapt our hymns to modern comprehension in their words and phraseology. So it was with the Psalms, and hence here particularly the argument from language must be used with the greatest restraint.

The tendency of later critics has been to use the linguistic argument only for the latest and most modern element in the Psalms, overlooking the quaint old ritual terms and phrases which linger here and there, or deleting or correcting them because they are no longer intelligible. Kent notes that the Sumerian hymns were sung in Babylonian and Assyrian temples for a period of two thousand years. (He might have added that translations of those hymns were made into later Babylonian and Assyrian, and that these also were used for liturgical and devotional purposes.) He points out further that from a comparison of the use of other peoples it is a fair presumption that the Hebrews also, from the earliest days, made use in their temples of ritual Psalms, and that we have in fact in the pre-exilic writings abundant allusions to such ritual psalmody. But, having stated these facts, he then goes on to ascribe Hebrew psalmody, practically entire, to the period after the Exile, and chiefly to the period from 400 to 150 B.C.

It would indeed be strange had the Hebrew people, having an ancient temple psalmody, differed so radically from all other peoples as to throw away after the Exile all that ancient devotional and liturgical material, and make an entirely new psalmody. Now, in point of fact, we find numbers even of the latest Psalms based on or using ritual phraseology which we can identify as such from pre-exilic writings. So the phrase *Hallelujah*, so common in the later Psalms, is one of the most ancient ritual phrases of the Hebrew people, containing the peculiar divine name of the Hebrews in its most ancient form. This was the *tehillah*, or cry uttered at the moment of performance of the sacrifice, and from this cry the Psalms as a whole received their name *tehillim*, a word which suggests at once that the Psalter was primarily a collection of hymns for use in connection with the temple sacrifices. Sometimes we can specify the particular sacrifice for which a Psalm was intended. So Jeremiah has preserved for us the ritual phrase used in his time at the thank-offering sacrifice: "Thanks be to Yahaweh, for He is good and His mercy endureth forever," which is the basis of a number of later Psalms. Some of the Psalms are provided with headings which indicate their ritual use, some of which are early, as shown by their present unintelligibility, while others are later in form but early in principle. Such headings are of great value as suggesting to the commentator how to look in the Psalm itself for indications of the purpose for which it was composed or to which it was adapted in the ritual services of the temple. Here and there rubrics have been preserved, generally in rudiment, which are of even greater value in the same direction.

In point of fact the Psalms ought to be studied in connection with Hebrew ritual as preserved to us in the sacrificial and other codes in the Pentateuch, or in allusions in the other writings of the Old Testament. Kent has

sought to study them in connection with historical events, and thought that he could classify them as of this or that period, according as they are grave or gay, triumphant or despondent. As already stated, he has made no use of the material to be derived from a study of the hymns of other peoples, and especially of the Sumerian-Babylonian hymns. If he has any suggestions to make touching these hymns in any way, it seems to be that in the Captivity the Jews must have been tremendously impressed with the ritual of the Babylonian temples and led to imitate it. A study of the Book of Genesis shows us that this was not the method in which the ancient mythology of the Euphratean basin affected Hebrew thought, and presumably what is true of the relations of Babylonian and Hebrew mythology is true also in principle of the relations of Babylonian and Hebrew psalmody. We find certain ritual phrases in both, not borrowed but common, such as, to cite but one, "*How long?*" and we find certain similar liturgies. The Babylonian penitential psalms are liturgies to be used in connection with the sacrifices to be offered to secure remission of sin for an individual suffering calamity. The calamity is sent by the deity because of sin, although in fact the sufferer may not know what sin he has committed to arouse the divine wrath. The calamity or sickness may be the consequence of a "secret sin," that is, an unwitting sin.

The Babylonians had a sacrificial ritual for this class of sufferers, of which the penitential Psalms were the liturgical accompaniment. Similarly the Hebrews had a ritual for this class of sacrifice, as expounded in Leviticus, Chapters 4-6, which of course had its liturgical accompaniment of psalmody; and as that class of liturgical literature among the Babylonians was both ancient and large, so from the size and contents of the Hebrew sacrificial ritual we should expect the similar Hebrew

liturgical literature to be. In point of fact, one of the largest categories in Hebrew psalmody, if not the largest, is the penitential Psalms. Sometimes these are designated as such by their headings, as in the case of Psalms 88 and 102; generally not. Some of them are in the later books, others are among the earliest hymns of the Psalter. By comparison with the Babylonian liturgy and ritual, of which latter we have abundant representations on seals and tablets, we can trace the liturgical use behind these Hebrew penitential Psalms also, such as the sixth, twenty-second, and fifty-first, which are beautiful specimens of the genus: the priest holding the penitent suppliant by the hand, the alternating lamentations of great woe, declarations of faith or innocence, and earnest supplications for relief put in the suppliant's mouth; the gift and the sacrifice; then the declaration of deliverance and triumph. And here is just what Kent has not done, in which he is not alone or original; he has not studied the Psalms in connection with religious ceremonial, to which study the old Sumerian and Babylonian psalmody offered a key.

Again, it would be a strange thing, in view of the history of Hebrew literature in general, if we found in the Psalter no traces of Israelite practices and Israelite shrines. In Hebrew narrative and Hebrew legislation we have a great amount of material from the northern kingdom, and our earliest prophetic writings come from the same source. The Book of Deuteronomy, and consequently the reforms connected with that book, show marked traces of Israelite influence and even of Israelite origin. So, to instance but one point, the mountains of the Blessing and the Curse are not mountains of Judah, but mountains of Israel, by the shrine of Joseph. Now there is one peculiarity which modern critics have noted as peculiar to the Israelite narrative—the use of Elohim instead of Yahaweh for God. But

there are two books of Psalms, the second (42-72) and the third (73-89), in which similarly Elohim is the regular designation of God instead of Yahaweh. (Kent per-versely changes the text in his translations, substituting *Jehovah* for *Elohim*.) Why should we not follow the same rule here which is followed in the analysis of the Pentateuch and ascribe these books to the northern kingdom, or to the influence of the northern kingdom?

But further, as Briggs in his Commentary has pointed out, in the Korah and Asaph collections (42-49, 84-89; 50, 73-83) contained in these two books of Psalms there is a peculiar frequency of reference to Jacob and Joseph; the land is the land of Joseph, or the land of Jacob and Joseph; God is the God of Jacob and Joseph, etc. There are also certain local references in these collections, which can be satisfied only by the supposition of their composition in the territory of the northern kingdom. So in Psalm 89 12 we have this verse,—

“North and south Thou hast created them;
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Thy name,”

where Tabor and Hermon are synonyms for south and north. Manifestly whoever wrote that wrote it at a point from which Tabor and Hermon were visible as the great land marks north and south, that is in north-eastern Galilee, on or close to the Jordan. But this is one of the Psalms of the Korah *addenda*, a little collection added at the close of the third book and belonging, according to its headings, with the Korah collection (84-89). Now turning to the Korah collection proper (42-49), we find that the first Psalm of that collection, Psalm 42, was by common consent of the commentators composed at the sources of the Jordan. Strangely, however, the commentators, while perceiving this, have assumed that it was written by some Levite from the temple of Jerusalem, carried captive by Nebuchadrezzar,

who as an exile there, or on his way to Babylon, composed this poem; and so Kent. The same old obsession of commentators, that the Psalms are not hymns but poems written on special occasions! It surely was written at the sources of the Jordan; but it also was certainly a liturgical hymn, intended for use at some ritual festivity. It is at least natural, therefore, to suppose that the original of this Psalm was a temple hymn of the Temple of Dan at the source of the Jordan; the more so as still another Psalm of this collection, Psalm 46, pictures a river sanctuary in a region whose description suggests the same locality. Many commentators, including Kent, assign Psalm 45 also to the northern kingdom. The ascription of this collection to the Sons of Korah points in the same direction, for according to the genealogy of the Priestly Code (Ex. 6 16 ff., Num. 26 57 ff.) Korah was the primitive ancestor of Asaph, who is the patronym of the guild of singers in Ezra and Nehemiah (cf. also 1 Chron. 6). But Korah was further a Levite of the Kohathite gens, to which Moses belonged. It was this gens of the Levites which furnished the priests of the Temple of Dan, according to the account of the founding of that temple in the Book of Judges. The Sons of Korah of the Psalter were apparently, then, Levites of the heretical Temple of Dan, which gives point to the anathema story of the Jerusalem priests against Korah contained in Numbers 16.

And here we come to the method of treating and dating the Psalms which holds out the most hope of real results, namely, by the collections. Kent notices the existence of these collections in the Psalter, and somewhere says that in a general way the collections are arranged according to age, so that the earliest Psalms are in the earliest books, and *vice versa*; but in actual practice, following the bad example of his immediate predecessors in Psalm study, he throws away this

objective evidence and proceeds to date each individual Psalm for itself on subjective grounds, assigning it to any period toward which he fancies the tone of its contents to point. In fact he ascribes only nine Psalms out of the first three books (1-89) to the pre-exilic period, three to the sixth century, twenty-three to the fifth, twenty-eight to the fourth, fourteen to the third, and seventeen to the second century before Christ. In his practical arrangement of the Psalms for study he shows a still greater disregard of the collections, arranging them in groups according to his understanding of their themes (under which grouping he classes, by the way, only twelve Psalms as "Liturgical Hymns"). The result of this treatment is to conceal from the student the evidences of the growth and development of the Psalter, and its true relation to the history, the religion, and the literature of the Jews.

As historical facts the division of the Psalter into five books, and of those five books again into a number of smaller collections, may not be disregarded; indeed they constitute the point of departure for Psalm study. Why is this collection designated as of David, that one as of the Sons of Korah, another as "The Prayers of David son of Jesse", etc.? Why is this group of Psalms (51-63) so systematically provided with headings, taken from the Books of Samuel, ascribing them to events in the life of David, while the other Psalms in the same book have no such headings? Why should this same group of Psalms be so uniformly penitential above all other groups, reminding one of a Sumerian collection of penitential hymns? Why should we have one divine name in two books, and another in the other three? Why does a collection like that of the Sons of Korah have a peculiar stamp of its own, in language and in literary charm, which all commentators note? Why is a collection headed "Songs of Degrees"? Why are some

Psalms divided by *Selahs*, and others not? Why do we have groups and collections of Psalms provided with musical headings, while other groups and collections are without them? and why should the musical notations differ in different collections? Above all, why should we have these musical notations and directions in the first three books and not also in the last two, and why should Chronicles and the Septuagint be ignorant of the meanings of those terms? Why should there be such a divergence as to general form and content between the Psalms of the first three and the last two books of the Psalter? Why should composite Psalms always be formed out of Psalms preceding and never out of Psalms following them in the Psalter? why should Psalms cite only preceding and never succeeding Psalms? and why should composite Psalms and Psalms framed on or citing other Psalms occur only or peculiarly in the last two books of the Psalter (90-150)? These and other questions of a similar sort, the very foundations of a proper understanding of the origin, the growth, and the purpose of the Psalter, are practically ignored in this volume.

Take the musical headings above referred to. They are evidence of long use of certain Psalms, and of growth and change in the treatment of the Psalter as a whole. They were preserved long after their sense was lost, as is the case regularly in liturgical and ritual use. They are relics, puzzling in their exact interpretation, but of immense value for the study of the growth of the Psalter. They are the sort of ear-mark by which we can judge antiquity. That they are used freely in the first three books, disappear in the last two, and are utterly unintelligible by the Greek period, shows not only that the first three books antedate the last two books, but that between the collections of the first three and of the last two books there is a gulf fixed, not merely of years, but also of conditions. The whole musical system had

changed, and the old terminology consequently become unintelligible. When, how, and why? It is in this direction, and not in the subjective direction of attempting to date the individual Psalms at the fancy of the critic, that sane Psalm study must proceed.

Kent has stated that the Psalms, as a whole, cover a very long period of growth. In point of fact, he has assigned four-fifths of them to the relatively brief period of one hundred and fifty years, from 400 to 150 B.C. I think the evidence goes to show that the Psalms of the first book are to be referred to the pre-exilic temple at Jerusalem; the second and third books to the northern kingdom of Israel; the fourth and fifth books to the period beginning with Nehemiah. But here we meet with another factor, which has been the cause of much confusion—the factor of long use, and of growth and adaptation due to that use.

Speaking roughly, we must date the Psalms according to their collections, and not pick out a Psalm from this collection and date it with a Psalm from another collection. But individual Psalms frequently seem to constitute exceptions to the collections in which they stand; or words, phrases, turns of thought, and allusions in individual Psalms seem entirely out of keeping with the dates suggested by the collection headings. These exceptions have seemed to the scholars to whose works I have particularly referred so numerous as to constitute the rule; hence they have proceeded to disregard the collections as such, and to date the individual Psalms according to the latest elements which they found or thought they found in them, by that means bringing together as often as not Psalms from very various collections. But this is very much as though one were to date the *Te Deum* by the form in which it appears in the American Prayer Book. Indeed the *Te Deum* is an admirable example of the method of creation,

development, and adaptation of liturgical hymns. Of course old writers attempted to connect it with individual authors and with a particular event, and so the tradition has come down that it was composed and recited responsively by Ambrose and Augustine at the conversion or baptism of the latter, toward the end of the fourth century. The first certain evidence of its existence, however, is from the fifth century and the Gallican Church. As we have it, it is a composite hymn, consisting of three clearly marked parts—a hymn to God as the Trinity, a hymn to Christ, and a closing penitential Psalm, which belongs in itself neither to the one hymn nor the other. In analyzing this, would you reserve the name *Te Deum* for the entire composite hymn, or use it for the two great pre-existing hymns also? How would you date it? By its completion as a composite, or by the creation of its parts? We have evidence of the existence of more primitive hymns containing words and thoughts now in those two great hymns of the *Te Deum*, going back to the third century. Would you refer the *Te Deum* to that date? That would be to follow the principle of dating the Psalms by the earliest discoverable element; to date the *Te Deum* by the date of the American Prayer Book would be to date it as some scholars wish to date the Psalms.

Again, in dating the *Te Deum*, would you date it by the tone of its contents? Would you suppose the first and second hymns contained in it to have been composed in a time of triumph, and the last stanzas to have been added in a period of humiliation? This does not seem to have been the fact; but the idea seems so plausible that it has been freely applied by Old Testament scholars in dating the Psalms of the Psalter, ascribing them to times of national success or of national disaster according as they are glad or sad. It is true that there are certain periods when, owing to external events or internal

movements, the penitential element is strong, and conversely it is generally legitimate to suppose that when the penitential element is strong, there is some extraordinary exciting cause. If you have large collections of penitential Psalms, and nothing else, as in the case of Lamentations, you may assume a period of catastrophe and oppression. Similarly if you find a collection of Psalms worked over again, changed from gladness to gloom, triumphant Psalms provided with penitential endings, and the like, you may assume that this represents an adaptation of those Psalms in a period of calamity or of puritanism. But this is true in the bulk of groups and collections, not of individual Psalms. We can trace precisely such reworking in some of the collections which I have suggested were originally pre-exilic.

In one Psalm of the first book the limits and methods of this re-working are curiously discernible. The ninth and tenth Psalms originally constituted one Psalm, an alphabetic acrostic. The first half and the end of that acrostic are still preserved in the ninth Psalm and the last few verses of the tenth Psalm. The greater part of the tenth Psalm, however, is not acrostic, and is quite different in tone from what precedes and follows, strongly penitential and woeful. In the forty-fourth Psalm the process and its limits are equally discernible, but the method of revision was different. The first part, verses 1-6, marked by a *Selah* at the close, are quite triumphant; then follows a long penitential addition, a very cry of calamity.

Revisions or adaptations of this character are so numerous that it seems clear the earlier collections as such went through a revision in some period of calamity, and a comparison with Lamentations suggests the Exile as at least the beginning of this period.

We have also unmistakable indications of revision of another sort, to connect the Psalms with a new theology.

So for instance the nineteenth Psalm, originally a hymn to Yahaweh as the sun, has been enlarged by the addition of a hymn of very different metre, the praise of the Law. Elsewhere also in this collection of hymns we find traces of a revision intended to adapt it to the new thought which became dominant with Ezra's reform in the fourth century.

I have said that hymns, and this is true of devotional literature in general, rarely contain references to extraneous events of such a nature as to render it possible to date them by those references. There are, however, notable exceptions to this. For instance, we have in an old Christian litany a petition for deliverance from the Lombards. The litany as litany is older than this particular petition, which shows that this litany was revised and adapted to the peculiar conditions prevailing in northern Italy about the time of the Lombard invasion. In the seventy-fourth Psalm we have a specific phrase which is almost equally dateable: "They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land." The earliest known mention of synagogues in Hebrew history dates from the year 242 B.C. The first destruction of synagogues of which we know occurred about 168 B.C., under Antiochus Epiphanes. The natural reference of this passage seems to be to the Maccabæan revolt. This does not necessarily mean that the original Psalm belongs to that period, however, and indeed it contains some of the most archaic mythological expressions and references which we find in the whole Psalter. It does suggest that the Psalter had not crystallized into absolute fixity by the Maccabæan period, but was still in living use, so that older hymns might be changed and adapted to then existing needs and conditions. And indeed, while no other Psalm contains so unmistakable a reference to Maccabæan conditions, nevertheless it seems probable that many earlier Psalms were more or less revised to

adapt them to those times and their new exigencies of worship.

I might note other marks of more or less extensive revisions: under the influence of the reverence for the Name, resulting in the substitution of Adonai, Lord, for Yahaweh; to adapt the Psalms to synagogue and personal use, with the increasing development of the synagogal as over against the temple religion. But through all these changes the *cadres* of the older collections remained unchanged, and ritual, liturgical, and musical notations were retained, even though long since unintelligible. We shall not presumably always be able to state the exact limits of changes and revisions, or even discriminate accurately in many cases between the new and the old; but if we are to do it at all and to follow in any fashion the complicated but fascinating story of the growth and development of this great body of Hebrew devotional liturgy, we must do it, I believe, by following the clue of the collections.

Time and space will not permit of further discussion either of the Psalms or of Kent's book. I have reviewed the latter at great length, not so much for itself as because it is symptomatic, the last expression of what I believe to be an entirely erroneous conception of the nature and origin of Hebrew psalmody prevalent among an influential school of Old Testament scholars.